

Increasing accessibility to medicine in Africa

An initiative aimed at creating sustainable approaches to improving access to medicine and thereby making a meaningful impact on patients' lives has been introduced in Kenya.

The Access to Medicines (AtM) strategy is designed for evolving healthcare systems in areas such as Latin America, South East Asia and Africa, tackle barriers that limit access to medicines. Of the 38m people who die from non-communicable diseases each year, three quarters – or 28m – of these deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.



“Access to innovative medicines and quality healthcare is vital to the health of people across the world,” says Christophe Weber, president and CEO of Takeda, the company behind the programme. “Our strategy will expand on our existing commitments to enhance global health, so that our innovative and potentially life-saving medicines can be more accessible and affordable to patients in regions such as sub-Saharan Africa.”

AtM includes targeted life-cycle management for the company's existing medicines, accelerated registration of its innovative medicines, increased participation of local centres in clinical trials, establishment of early access programmes where applicable, and introduction of innovative approaches to address affordability for those patients whose ability to pay the full cost of treatment is limited.

For decades, Takeda has provided product, funding and access in many parts of the world, based on regional needs. The new AtM strategy builds on that by focusing on geographies and therapy areas with the highest unmet need.

The announcement coincides with the opening of offices in Nairobi, Kenya, from where Takeda aims to forge sustainable AtM partnerships adopting a 'not-for-profit' approach.

Increasing access to some of its most innovative medicines in the areas of oncology and specialty gastroenterology, as well as its vaccine candidates for communicable diseases such as dengue and chikungunya, are among the key points of the strategy.

"We have rolled-out comprehensive patient assistance programmes in a number of emerging markets. Our aspiration is that eligible patients who are prescribed our medicines will be able to get access to them," comments Takeda's Giles Platford, president, emerging markets business unit.

Two primary initiatives include the Takeda Initiative, a 10-year programme started in 2010 to partner with the Global Fund to fight Aids, tuberculosis and malaria by strengthening the capacity of healthcare workers in Africa; and HERhealth, which works to address the pressing social need for women's health awareness and services. Takeda has supported the initiative since 2015 in partnership with Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) and aims to expand the programme reach to women in Ethiopia and Kenya.

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